DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 327 978 EA 022 659

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TITLE Women and Their Stories: Nine Case Studies in Educational Administration.
PUB DATE Nov 89
NOTE 30p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the California Educational Research Association (Burlingame, CA, November 16-17, 1989).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Attitudes; *Administrator Characteristics; Administrator Effectiveness; *Educational Administration; Elementary Secondary Education; *Leadership Styles; Personal Narratives; Postsecondary Education; Rural Education; School Effectiveness; Sex Bias; Sex Role; Sex Stereotypes; *Women Administrators; *Women Faculty

ABSTRACT

Following a thorough review of current studies and literature on women in leadership, this document examines the results of a study conducted to determine the significance of female gender in educational leadership, and how attitudes, values, perceptions, and life experiences of women differ from those of men and are reflected in female leadership approaches and actions. Nine white female administrators at the rural district or school site level, located in the San Joaquin Valley in California, were interviewed using 10 open-ended questions derived from literature on women in leadership. The examination of the results of the study and the numerous direct quotes from the interviewees provided in this document serve to shed light on female administrators' thoughts, feelings, and perceptions regarding: (1) qualities of women in educational leadership; (2) difficulties experienced; (3) differences in the ways that they perceived women and men work; (4) issues surrounding authority; (5) leadership in instructional improvement, evaluation, student and community relations, and decision making; and (6) life experiences. The study's implications for research on women in administration and for current women administrators are also mentioned. (30 references) (CLA)

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Women and Their Stories:

Nine Case Studies in Educational Administration

by

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EA 022 659

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Only in recent years have studies of leadership included women or looked at gender differences in leadership styles and characteristics (Dobbins, 1986; Heller, 1982; Russell, 1988; Schaef, 1981, 1985; Shakeshaft, 1986, 1987). Hollander (1987) observed that neither men nor women are more effective leaders. According to Shakeshaft (1986), however, although there is literature that documents no differences in leadership between males and females, the research does not extend itself beyond the world of white males. She wrote that characteristics of women in leadership were noted by absence in the literature. From the time of Plato in 5th century B.C. leadership was identified with the recognition of the good, (Karelis, 1987). According to Karelis (1987), only (males) were gifted with the potential to recognize the good. This potential was to be encouraged, and these people were to be put in charge of the group.

Bogue's (1985) writings portrayed administration in the schools as an artistic activity, because, as he wrote,

> Practicing administrators must integrate theories on different themes, such as decision making, organizational structure, authority, communication, and personality, and different theories on the same theme, such as motivation (p.6).

Bogue (1985) wrote of the need for flexibility, sensitivity, for deliberation rather than quick decision making, and for a capacity to wonder. He further stated that each of us with leadership responsibilities carries with us a vision as well.

Recent writings have enumerated similar characteristics of leadership. Qualities interwoven throughout the literature included: (a) a vital and clear vision (Bogue, 1985; Duke, 1987; Gardner, 1987, 1988; Levine, 1987; Manasse, 1986); (b) a strong and positive self-concept (Bogue, 1985); (c) decision making and judgment in action (Bogue, 1985; Gardner, 1988; Manasse, 1986); (d) honesty, integrity, and strong moral components (Daugherty, 1987; Larkin, 1986; Manasse, 1986); and (e) communication skills (Bingham, 1986; Clark & Teddlie, 1987; Daugherty, 1987; DeConick & Level, 1987; Niehouse, 1988; Papalewis & Brown, 1988; Quate, 1986).

Both Heller (1982) and Shakeshaft (1987) addressed the fact that the inclusion of women in leadership studies might challenge and redefine behaviors of those in leadership positions. Shakeshaft (1987) referred to the need for women administrators to be able to tell their own stories, as their problems and their life experiences are different than those of men.

Other authors (Gray, 1987; Heller, 1982; Marshall, 1986; Sanford, 1980, Schaef, 1985; Yeakey, Johnston & Adkinson, (1986) referred to the overvaluing of the masculine perspective. Gray (1987) alluded to the machismo of the schools. Schaef (1985) wrote of the White Male System, which she viewed as comprising four myths. These are: (a) the White Male System is the only thing that exists; (b) the White Male System is innately superior; (c) the White Male System knows and understands everything; and (d) it is possible to be totally logical, rational, and objective. According to Schaef (1985),

> All four myths of the White Male System can be summarized by another, that is almost always unspoken, but nevertheless present and real. The final myth is that it is possible for one to be God (p.15).

Shakeshaft (1986) pointed specifically to the research and theories of Schaef (1981) and agreed with Schaef (1981) that there is the world of white males and the world of women and minority groups--worlds which white men seldom realize exists. She stated:

> Thus for women to be able to negotiate the world of White males is to be expected. They wouldn't have been selected for school administrators if they didn't comprehend and master the culture. In addition, however, they have knowledge of a female culture and socialization that they bring to the job. It is this world that researchers have failed to investigate when they have studied male and female differences, and their absence of knowledge of the female world has led them to assume that differences don't exist (p. 167).

According to Shakeshaft (1986) it is these worlds that must be examined if we are to understand differences in leadership in organizations.

Other authors, (Gray, 1987; Heller, 1982; Jones, 1987; Schaef, 1981, 1985; Shakeshaft, 1986, 1987) wrote of the overvaluing of the masculine, especially in the context of leadership. According to Heller (1982), "Considering the plight of men and women as leaders involves two separate and often confused issues, behaviors and values" (p. 164). She contended that although there may be a shift toward a more positive valuing of stereotypically feminine leadership styles, this does not necessarily mean an endorsement of women in leadership positions. Writings of Schaef (1981, 1985) and Shakeshaft (1986, 1987) documented that there are significant differences between the worlds of males and females.

Recent studies have been conducted in the area of gender differences in leadership (Clarke ' Teddlie, 1987; Dobbins, 1986; Owen, 1987; Papalewis & Brown, 1988). Dobbins (1986) investigated differences between male and female leaders' responses to poorly performing subordinates. Identified leaders studied vignettes and rated appropriateness of corrective actions. Dobbins (1986) found that corrective actions of female leaders were more affected

by likableness and sex of the subordinate than were corrective actions of the male leaders. These results support the proposition that male leaders tend to respond to subordinates based on norm of equity, while female leaders responded based on a combination of equity and equality.

Owen (1987) studied rhetorical themes of emergent female leaders. Three leaderless groups as part of an upperdivision small group communication course in a private university in the northewestern United States were studied. During the first week of the first semester, students were requested to form groups of their choosing that were about equal in number of males and females. No other criterion was used. Of the 21 students, three groups were formed. Each females and 5 males; Group 3, two females and 4 males. Each group was charged with solution of a campus life problem, meeting in and out of class weekly during the 12 week semester. Owen (1987) found: (a) women emerged as leaders when they maintained a subtle, yet hard-working ethic; (b) females outworked others by accepting more responsibility and tasks than men; (c) females consciously strived to emerge as organizer and coordinator and were reluctant to be called leader; and (d) females lead by hard work with considerable attention given to creating themes of cohesion, egalitarian practices and togetherness.

Papalewis and Brown (1988) examined gender characteristics of communication on student evaluation measures of instruction. Their study offered evidence that male/female differences are observed by students and that such differentiating characteristics are related to evaluating instruction. According to Papalewis and Brown (1988) the interdependence of research and practice in the schooling process has generally failed in the past to integrate female experiences, values, and styles of communicating by not recognizing gender characteristics in evaluation measures.

Recent articles (Gotwalt & Towns, 1986; Heller, 1982; Marshall, 1986; Shakeshaft, 1987; Yeakey, Johnston & Adkinson, 1986) provide descriptions of women in educational administration literature. Shakeshaft (1987) identified six stages in the literature on women in educational leadership: (a) documentation of lack of women in leadership positions in administration; (b) identification of outstanding women in the history of school administration; (c) investigation of women's place in the schools as either subordinate or disadvantaged; (d) documentation of the Female World, and study of women on their own terms; (e) questioning of how theory might change to include women; and (f) transformation of theory to increase understanding of

women's and men's experiences.

Shakeshaft (1987) asserts that the implications of research on women administrators means a complete reshaping of the field. Until theory and research is reconceptualized to take women's experiences into account, we are writing a history and practice of males in school administration. She recommended: (a) immediate action in developing a research agenda that allows discovery of factors that need to be taken into consideration in order to respond to women students; (b) expansion of courses to include women's experiences in educational administration; (c) case studies of women to be used in classes; (d) internship of women students with women administrators when possible; (e) encouragement and support of research on styles of women administrators; (f) women speakers in the classrooms and on college campuses; and (g) addition of women to college and university faculties in educational administration.

The purpose of this study was to examine female leadership roles in education. The focus was on life experiences of women in school administration. The specific questions addressed were:

1. What is the significance of female gender in leadership in education?

2. What are the attitudes, values, perceptions, and life experiences of women in educational administration?

3. How are attitudes, values, perceptions, and life experiences reflected in female approaches to leadership?

Methodology

Nine white female administrators were interviewed during Spring 1989, using an interview protocol designed specifically for this study. Each of the interviewees agreed to a 1 to 2 hour interview. Five of the interviews were taped. Interviewees consisted of rural district level and school site administrators, located in the San Joaquin Valley, California. Two were district superintendents, three were elementary principals, one a high school vice-principal, one curriculum coordinator, and two were special education principals.

Derived from the literature, ten open-ended questions were developed to gather information about female administrator's thoughts, feelings, and perceptions as related to: qualities of women in educational leadership; difficulties experienced; differences in ways that they perceived men and women work; issues surrounding authority; leadership in instructional improvement, evaluation, student and community relations, and decision making; and, life

experiences.

The analysis of the data was qualitative. Nine case studies were analyzed. Raw data were translated into theme categories by each question, one through ten. This ordering allowed the discovery of commonalities or patterns (Owens, 1987), defined to be: female administrators' thoughts, feelings, and perceptions related to qualities of leadership, particularly, qualities of leadership for women in education; difficulties experienced as women administrators; differences in ways that men and women work, and; issues surrounding authority for male and female administrators.

Findings

Results gave insight as to the value of life experiences of women administrators; called attention to societal stereotypes; and, validated that characteristics of women are conducive to effective schooling. Descriptions of shared values, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings pertaining to leadership qualities revealed an abundance of unique philosophies and experiences in the personal stories of each woman administrator. The shared values, perceptions, and feelings were indicative of the female culture, socialization, and knowledge which they brought to their jobs (Shakeshaft, 1986, 1987).

Shared qualities viewed as important for leadership in education by the nine white female administrators included those qualities identified by the literature as being feminine (Heller, 1982; Jones, 1987; Schaef, 1981, 1985; Shakeshaft, 1986, 1987) One elementary school principal phrased it this way:

> I think that we have to trust our sensitivities and our intuitions. I think that's the strongest thing that women have to offer--their intuitions. Women are sensitive; they're perceptive. I think that when you learn to trust that in a leadership position, that it doesn't very often fail you, and it tends to bring out the best in people rather than closing people off.

The same elementary principal continued:

> I don't think women are as ego based as men. I can give and take, and it doesn't live and end with me. It lives and ends with our product, which is what we do with our children. I don't see it as a battle that I have to win. I see it as a destination that we have to reach.

Their responses reflected the shared belief in the importance of organizational skills and knowledge, along with a combination of training and experience in education (Daugherty, 198; Gardner, 1988; Heller, 1982; Lutz, 1986), and vision (Duke, 1987; Gardner, 1988; Larkin, 1986; Manasse, 1986; Morris, 1986). Statements reflecting shared beliefs were: (a) "You have to be very well organized because you're in charge of so many things, and you have so many deadlines that you have to meet."; (b) "I bring a lot of things that I've been taught, to what I do. I'm a visionary type of

person. I have an ability to look beyond. I get a picture, and I strive for this."

The importance of vision (Gardner, 1988; Levine, 1986; Manasse, 1986) was woven in with responses to other questions in the interview: "Sometimes my vision needs to be shared with people; at other times we need to have collective vision." One elementary principal shared:

> I began teaching because I believed in the power of education, and from that profession, I went into administration because I wanted to support that. So I really believe that the power of education lies with the teachers. And I think that brings about an environment where all teachers participate in leadership of the school. It means that its a shared kind of thing.

The women identified specific characteristics to facilitate the translation of their vision into reality: These were: (a) honesty; (b) innovation; (c) creativity; (d) inquisitiveness; (e) enthusiasm; (f) physical energy and stamina; (g) positive outlook; (h) hearing; (i) desire for improvement; and (j) credibility. An elementary principal observed:

> There is a matter of credibility. You have to be there with your teachers. You need to know what is going on. You have to know your salt.

As Marshall (1986) found, female leaders believed that their credibility was more dependent on their knowledge, expertise, communication skills and authenticity. They lead through competence, sensitivity, visibility,

Schaef (1985) wrote, regarding power; that as we share power, it increases. According to Schaef (1985) this is also true with ideas. Women administrators were seen in their responses as sharing in the leadership of the schools, and in the power. One elementary principal stated differences this way: "Perhaps a better delineation would be 'authoritarian' as compared to 'participatory' leadership." Another elementary principal said: "There are educated adults at this school. I consult, and we share."

Responses substantiated findings in the literature: Women employ a collaborative approach to decision making, resulting in a sharing of power. According to Shakeshaft (1987), from speech patterns to decision-making styles, women exhibit a more democratic, participatory style that encourages inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness in schools. Women involve themselves more with staff and students, ask for and get greater participation, and maintain more closely knit organizations. Staffs of women principals have higher job satisfaction and are more engaged in their work than those of male administrators.

Administrators interviewed in this study identified certain specific traits of problem solving and decision making such as: (a) "I like to open a lot of things up to group problem solving...get input from administrative

staff."; (b) "I depend on my past experiences, on getting a lot of input from people who have experience in that area, looking at it from different ways, taking it apart and analyzing."; (c) "Sometimes I make a decision, and I don't waffle. And I take responsibility and learn from it. If its a decision that's long term, I will very carefully assemble that."; (d) "Sometimes you have to give parameters. Working as a group you get people to buy into what the solution is."; (e) "You've got to do it in a personal caring way."; (f) "Decide what you can do effectively and what is in the realm of your responsibility."; (g) "I do not make major changes in staff meetings. I consult with individuals."

Most interviewees noted attitudes, values, and perceptions to be different than those of men. One elementary school principal noted that she felt differences are helpful; "differences keep a balance," admitting that she may be generalizing to her experience. She stated:

> If the world were run by women we'd probably all go broke. We'd provide breakfast, lunch, dinner, after school day care. We'd do home teaching, and we'd take care of everybody. And the men tend to have a much more cut and dried kind of approach--this is our task, and this is our job and this is what we should do. There's a nice balance there.

Other principals noted the following differences. One elementary school principal stated:

> I really believe that we have all the other

> perspectives that the men have, but in addition we have nurturing and caring, and we're raised in the culture with that. This makes us more understanding.

Another principal stated:

> There are differences. Some have to do with personality traits, rather than with the male/female thing. It's good if you can have a little bit of both. You need a mix of male and female. The kids need a mix. They need models of both male and female.

Feminine qualities (Heller, 1982) of listening, patience, 'giving up,' commitment, vision, being open and honest, caring, vulnerability, communication, and consistency were listed, with most emphasis placed on listening in each of these areas. Female administrators imparted their own stories as they replied to the questions.

Emphasizing listening, an elementary principal said:

> One of the things that I demand at this school--and this is not a consensus item, this is not something that I negotiate--this is a demand that I have, that we take the time to listen to the children. If a child has something to say to you and you're walking down the hall to get your lunch, you stop, and you listen.

The same principal said: "We also do a lot of hugging here." She continued:

> We have to be consistently caring and consistently rational because we may be the only people that some of these little kids have had exposure to who are consistently caring and consistently rational. And so they have to feel secure here, because if they're not secure, they won't learn.

A principal of special education called attention to a positive approach in student relations, as well as acceptance and consistency. She said:

> I think you have to have a positive approach when you're dealing with students. They know, they sense, regardless of what their cognitive abilities are, how you are feeling about them, and whether you like them. Be accepting of their behaviors, and let them know that if there is a problem that you're dealing with, it is their behavior that you're concerned about. Separate the behavior from the person. You need to be consistent in your expectancies so that you're not confusing them.

Caring and nurturing were identified in the need to listen (Marshall, 1986; Shakeshaft, 1987). An elementary principal described this caring in community relations: "I find that the best community relations is for us to be good to their children." She stated further:

> I think that with a lot of parents that we have in my community here, they just need someone to listen to them, and sometimes they need somebody to come and yell at because they trust schools. Schools are usually places where people 'can't get 'cha back.' They won't hurt 'cha.' Schools are places where people help you. So a lot of times we'll find that parents come, and they'll start out attacking and if we give them our time and our attention, we find out that there are the pressures of the world, because people who are struggling with the world don't feel like they have control over their lives. So they come to school and yell at us and if we're rational and if we're consistent with what we say, then usually they'll open up, and become close to us.

A high school vice principal expressed the need to realize that "the school is tied with the community." An elementary principal expressed her belief in the power of listening in the following way: She told the story of how she goes to the meeting of the Tribal Council at the Reservation near her school. She said: "If there is a

problem, I tell them to let me know." She listed three steps to her listening: "(a) Listen impassively; they need to be heard. They need to know that you have listened; (b) Be open; you have to lay yourself open. You have to get rid of the ego; (c) Request communication." In regard to student relations: "I deal with students like I do everybody else. Everybody gets to tell their story."

According to the high school vice principal:

> I think you need to be really open and listen to what the community needs are and how the community can help the high school, and the high school help the community. Be involved in the community so that you really have a feel for what the needs are.

Shared response of the female administrators revealed values, behaviors, and beliefs consistent with dimensions of leadership for instructional improvement and teacher evaluation set forth by Duke (1987). As one elementary principal said: "In instruction, you lead. You don't manage" (Brubaker & Simon, 1986). All of the women were intensely committed to their jobs and defined leadership primarily as developing a mission for the school district and motivating others to attain district goals.

Women interviewees supported the fact that "ways of establishing authority that work for men do not necessarily work for them" (Shakeshaft, 1987). Different ways of establishing authority were identified in the responses as:

(a) body language: "I think a whole lot has to do with, when somebody is in charge, and has assumed the responsibility, everybody sort of relaxes."; (b) "Direct eye contact, forceful voice rather than loud."' (c) Fairness: "By accepting all ideas, reflecting on all ideas, reasoning out loud regarding pros and cons."' (d) Listening: "It is important to hear what people say, to brainstorm, and to get the whole picture."; (e) Belief in personal strength: "You can be personally strong. You believe in what you do. You can be committed, and you can be very feminine, be a leader, and be in charge."

One elementary school principal described a successful female principal who just "moved gracefully, standing tall, and moving with authority, and all the little children moved just like her." The same administrator commented that when men want to show authority they kind of "bluster." A principal of special education pointed out:

> I think number one, the way you dress and handle yourself has an awful lot to do with it. I think you can be a leader, and still be feminine in the way you dress. It's all in the manner in which you deal with people. You don't have to wear pants all the time.

The feeling expressed indicated an awareness of need for the pursuit of strength and determination of women administrators (Marshall, 1986). As one district superintendent stated:

> I think tenacity is really important. I think its getting a little easier now because there are more and more women occupying leadership roles, but I know when I first started in this , one had to be extremely tenacious. And, I also think having a thick skin, and that goes with any leadership position, because you're not going to make everybody happy all the time. But, I think that women can't afford to be discouraged by having to try and try again, because many times the variable at play when you actually apply for a position is your sex, (and it'll never come out) so its very easy to get discouraged and to think, 'Well, I don't have the qualifications, or I don't have the qualities that they're looking for,' when, in fact, its an unspoken and never will be spoken reason why you're not employed.

Another special education principal shared:

> I think number one is probably determination. Generally, it takes women longer to get into a leadership role. They tend to start out as teachers and work up through the grapevine. I think you need to be extremely organized, and you know where you're going at all times even though it may appear not. And you need to be knowledgeable about your field. I think, I just have the feeling sometimes, that men tend to bluff their way through, and I don't think you can get by with that. You need to be strong.

Women have to push more; to show more strength (Marshall, 1986).

Reflected in the replies of the women administrators was the misogyny of the male world. According to Shakeshaft (1987), "The misogyny of the male world makes women's lives in administration different from men's." One superintendent, speaking as a woman in the superintendency, mentioned the "unspoken thing," and "image." She stated:

> We do not give the powerful, in-control image, that men simply by virtue of their size and the fact that they

> are male, will project. And that is something that is very hard to deal with. And if you're small, and if you're a petite woman on top of everything else--to project power, and to project that you're in control, I think is difficult.
>
> I think sometimes its very difficult for people to actually realize that a woman is actually accomplishing a lot of very powerful things, because they just don't see it. They look at you, and that's not what they see. They don't see the typical, 'in charge' image of a man.

She continued:

> I'm speaking as a woman in the superintendency, more than I am in other roles, because that's where they really have this mind set--this stereotype of the man--the tall man that's in charge.

One administrator stated that the most difficult situation for her was the hostility of a male administrator (Marshall, 1986; Shakeshaft, 1987) which involved a great deal of conflict. She shared: "He told me that I was too aggressive...and competitive...and reminded him of his mother. There was this stereotype...and there wasn't anything I could do about it." One superintendent stated:

> I believe that men rely more on image and associations with other people--power brokerage types of things--much more than they do on skill. I think the women in this business have had to absolutely be more skillful, and have had to know more because they can't rely on image.

Responses indicated a great deal of variation in the thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of the female administrators. Evidenced was the fact that each was coming from their own particular time and place in life--where they

were presently, and where they had been. They were telling stories and sharing meanings (Gardner, 1987; Shakeshaft, 1987). And their stories were reflected in their approaches to leadership.

The life experience of the women were vital to their leadership roles: An elementary school principal confided that she had grown up with men, with boys, was competitive, and had to be "careful not to get dirty with the guys" when its time to fight. "I think that's the hardest thing--I like to battle things through." The same principal alluded to the difficulty in changing perceptions on the part of her male counterparts as being the most difficult thing. Perceptions like, as she stated:

> Teachers are women and they should be in the classroom and administrators are male, and they should make the decisions.

A picture emerged of the significance of the interviewees' past and present lives and the significant persons in their lives. Several of the women noted significance of their early lives in their homes and communities and schools. They referred, in some instances, to the values of their families and of other special persons in their lives. It seemed as if they were touched and empowered in meaningful ways by others, and this "touching" gave definition to their administrative roles.

According to one superintendent:

> I grew up in a home where long before there was such a thing as a feminist movement, my father felt that all of us could do anything we wanted to do, and that's the way he portrayed life to us. 'You can do whatever you want to do. Wherever your abilities and your drive will take you--you can do that.' It was the same for me as it was for my brother. There was no difference.
>
> I think my father was ahead of his time in many ways. When he talked to me about what I was going to do in the future, there were never any limits. It was not traditional discussion. It was: 'What do you want to do?'
>
> I never thought about the fact that I wasn't supposed to do these things. Now, I realized once I got out in the world, that other people didn't feel the same way I did. I didn't grow up thinking there were any doors closed.

The same superintendent confided that both her mother and grandmother were role models for her after the death of her father when she was a young girl, "accepting responsibility without questioning, and doing, without ever feeling that they were doing anything they weren't capable of doing."

Three of the administrators, two elementary school principals and the high school vice principal, responded that they had grown up with men and boys, and that this was important in their perceptions and values, and feelings about what they could and could not do. Several of the administrators commented that everything just seemed to "point toward" educational administration for them, even

though this was not what they originally intended. An elementary principal told the story of how she had graduated with a degree in German, and didn't know what she was going to do after she had graduated. She said:

> It was during the Vietnamese War, and I applied for and was accepted in an overseas job, but on the way home I just couldn't tell my family I was going to be gone to Vietnam for six months, so I went back to school and got my credentials to teach in the high school, and from there went to the county office, then to the principalship.

A special education principal felt that she was moved in the direction of administration by situations. Happy in the classroom, but because her classes were moving to another part of the county and she didn't want to drive so far, she interviewed for a position of education specialist. From this position she moved to program specialist, an administrative position, and worked toward administrative credentials. She confided:

> I always said that I didn't want to be a principal. In fact, the last two years, I had become really interested in working in vocational education. I thought that this is where it was with kids. And this is where I was headed.

Six of the administrators interviewed went from classroom teaching positions, to positions in the county office, to their present administrative jobs (Marshall, 1986). An elementary school principal referred to a time of recognition. She said:

> There was a recognition that there came a time to affect more than thirty persons a year, and that I enjoy working with children and adults. I wanted to have a greater effect on a larger group in the educational realm.

Responses of the women sustained findings (Shakeshaft, 1987) that women administrators on the whole, come to their administrative roles through their desire to work with children and with other adults in an interested, caring way.

One superintendent referred to the significance of vision in her life. She said that she had always had a vision, a vision of "where I wanted to go and what I wanted to do." Her earliest memories were associated with being in and a part of schools. The importance of vision was documented in the literature by Manasse, (1986); MacAdam, (1986); and by Morris, (1987).

Four of the administrators responded that their mothers were teachers and had provided them with role models. One elementary school principal said:

> I was in high school, and terribly, terribly bored. My mother was a teacher, and my mother always worked at the dining room table until late into the night doing all the things that she did as a teacher. I thought it was just terribly, terribly silly, what she was doing and what I had to go through. I guess that was the point where I decided that somebody really should 'do' education so that students really like to participate. I wanted to do something different than what I had been exposed to.

The same elementary school principal referred to the power of a woman teacher in her life. She shared:

> When I was in school, my third grade teacher gave me a compliment about how I looked, that changed completely the way I saw myself.

Still another, a special education principal, mentioned encouragement provided by a woman she worked for, who saw her capabilities and encouraged her to go into teaching. She also addressed the significance of her own self-awareness. She stated:

> I really think that once I became aware of my own personal strengths and weaknesses, acknowledging the fact that I have learning handicaps myself, but saying, 'that's okay,' and finally getting to the point of accepting the good and the bad, and being allowed to be challenged, and accepting the challenge.

One elementary school principal spoke of her positive experiences with principals and with the county superintendent. Another focused on her supportive and tolerant family, and on the support of people she worked with "who have allowed me to make mistakes and live with the consequences" (Gotwalt & Towns, 1986).

In answer to the research questions: (a) female gender was found to be significant in leadership in education, as reflected in definitions of leadership; (b) attitudes, values, perceptions, and life experiences of women administrators are different than those of men, and; (c) attitudes, values, perceptions, and life experiences are reflected in leadership approaches and actions.

Implications

If leadership qualities named by female administrators are important, and if the female world exemplifies the world of effective schools, then it appears logical and necessary that; female beliefs, thoughts, and feelings be heard, discussed, and shared; research and practice integrate female life experiences, values and perceptions; and, gender characteristics be recognized in administration in education.

This study, in presenting the stories of nine women administrators, has definite implications for continued research on life experiences of women in school administration. The study has implications on administrator training programs, college textbooks, and promotion decisions and hiring practices in education.

There are implications for women who presently share in the work of administration in schools. As role models, it appears important that these women continue to recognize and value their knowledge, skills, perceptions, and beliefs. It is by expressing and modeling their female qualities, that women administrators are able to add new life-giving dimensions to education. Female qualities are needed in education to provide richness, authenticity, and wholeness. As an elementary principal stated: "Our femaleness is an asset."

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